Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
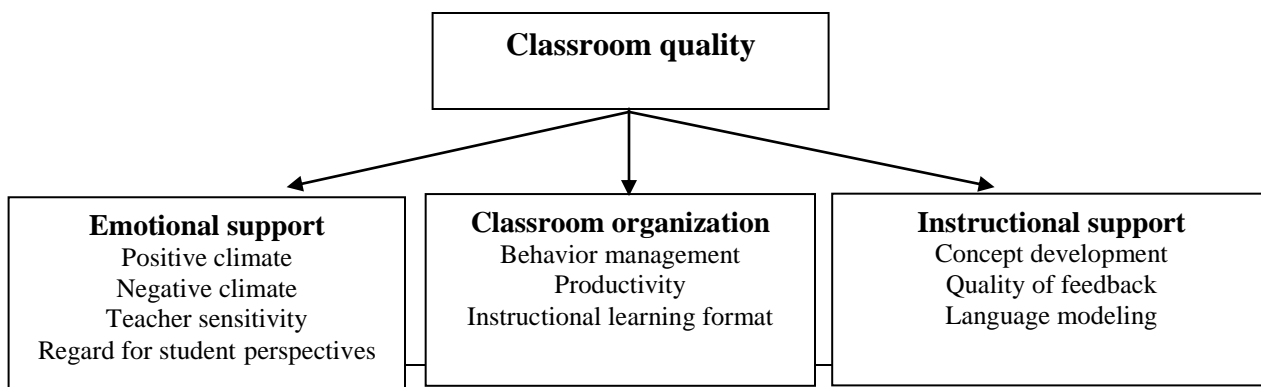
Introduction   The CLASS is an observation instrument developed to assess classroom quality in preschool. The CLASS was developed based on an extensive literature review as well as on other program assessment instruments used in large-scale classroom observation studies in the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Care and the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCELD) MultiState Pre-K Study.

The CLASS supports appropriate professional development to improve teacher sensitivity, support, feedback loops, and concept development. One mechanism for improving teacher child interaction in these areas is a web-based program called My Teaching Partner. This program provides lesson plans, appropriate video examples, video of analysis of the teacher interactions, as well as consultant support.

The CLASS differs from the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales – Revised (ECESR-R) and the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) or other program standards such as NAEYC or Head Start. These instruments measure program structure. CLASS provides common language and clearly articulated dimensions directly related to instructional practices that support academic and social outcomes.

CLASS domains   The CLASS domains are based on developmental theory and research suggesting that interactions between students and adults are the primary mechanism of student development and learning. This system does not evaluate materials, the physical environment or safety, or the adoption of a specific curriculum. The CLASS focuses on interaction between teachers and students and what teachers do with the materials they have.

Classroom quality		
Emotional support Positive climate Negative climate Teacher sensitivity Regard for student perspectives	**Classroom organization** Behavior management Productivity Instructional learning format	**Instructional support** Concept development Quality of feedback Language modeling

CLASS dimensions   The domains are represented in the graphic above by three boxes; emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Each domain includes multiple dimensions. All dimensions are scored on a 7 point scale, ranging from low (1,2) to mid (3,4,5) to high (6, 7). Each dimension captures a distinct aspect of the domain. Examples are listed in the table below.

Dimension	Examples
Positive Climate	Relationships Positive Affect Positive Communication Respect
Negative Climate	Negative Affect Punitive Control Sarcasm/Disrespect Severe Negativity
Teacher Sensitivity	Awareness Responsiveness Addresses Problems Student Comfort
Regard for Student Perspectives	Flexibility and Student Focus Support for Autonomy and Leadership Student Expressions Restriction of Movements
Behavior Management	Clear Behavior Expectations Proactive Redirection of Misbehavior Student Behavior
Productivity	Maximizing Learning Time Routines Transitions Preparation
Instructional Learning Formats	Effective Facilitation Variety of Modalities and Materials Student Interest Clarity of Learning Objectives
Concept Development	Analysis and Reasoning Creating Integration Connections to the Real World
Quality of Feedback	Scaffolding Feedback Loops Prompting Thought Processes Providing Information Encouragement and Affirmation
Language Modeling	Frequent Conversations Open-Ended Questions Repetition and Extension Self- and Parallel Talk Advanced Language

Research

Research from the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) the center for CLASS indicates"

- Children in pre-K classrooms offering higher levels of Instructional Support displayed better language skills at the end of kindergarten;
- Children in classrooms with higher Literacy Focus scores (in which teachers offered more explicit literacy instruction, embedded in meaningful activities) made greater gains in print awareness and emergent literacy;
- Language modeling was associated with greater gains in vocabulary and emergent literacy for children coming from homes where English was not spoken;
- For more positive social outcomes there appear to be strong effects in classrooms scoring over a 5 on Emotional Support (included Behavior Management in this study);
- Children in classrooms in which the teacher had a consultant (My Teaching Partner model) displayed greater growth in vocabulary across the preschool year;;
- Consultancy with My Teaching Partner, was a more powerful intervention in high poverty classrooms and,
- Consultation was associated with positive growth in children's early literacy skills for new teachers.

Application

Approximately 18 AEA early childhood staff were trained to reliably assess classrooms using this instrument. These consultants were asked to assess one classroom before February. Follow up will occur at the next AEA EC Leadership meeting.

The Department is working with the University of Northern Iowa to provide additional training, reliability checks. In addition, DE is working with CASTL to consider appropriate staff development for teachers.